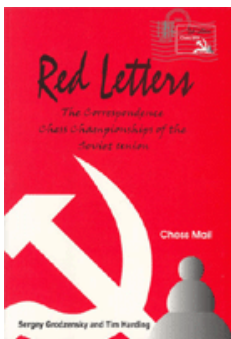




COLUMNISTS

*From the Archives*

Hosted by  
Mark Donlan



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From the Archives...

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The Kibitzer by Tim Harding

Who Dunst It?

As more and more openings become overgrown with fashionable theory, the attractions of the opening move 1 Nc3 become apparent.

On one hand, the knight move appeals to the player who is not particularly concerned about achieving an opening advantage with White, but just wants original positions to get opponents out of the book. On the other hand, 1 Nc3 can be employed as a sophisticated transpositional weapon by players who know a fair bit about a variety of openings, and can use the move to avoid lines they don't like or to get other players into lines that those opponents would have avoided from normal move orders.

As with any “irregular” opening, 1 Nc3 has accumulated theory of its own, but there are still plenty of little-trodden paths and the books tend to stop a lot earlier than with openings like the Ruy Lopez and Queen's Gambit.

Some very strong correspondence players use it regularly, if not invariably. The Danish CC grandmaster Ove Ekebjærg has just completed all his games with white in the 14th CC World Championship reaching a score of 6/7 with 1 Nc3, and he is now certain of at least runner-up spot in the tournament. A strike rate of 85.71%, largely against other grandmasters, is not bad with any opening! Some of Ekebjærg's games with 1 Nc3 transpose to other openings, but many follow original paths and his wins tend to be long and strategically based.

In America, following *Modern Chess Openings*, 1 Nc3 is known as the Dunst Opening after a player named Ted Dunst who employed it often. Here is one of the miniatures he won with it.

*Ted Dunst – Gisela Gresser, USA 1950*

1 Nc3 e5

This move offers White an immediate transposition into the Vienna or delayed transposition into many other open games, but there is no need for White to play 2 e4. After all the queen's knight prevents the e5-pawn advancing so the other knight can come out and attack it! Let's see what Black does before we commit our central pawns.

2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6

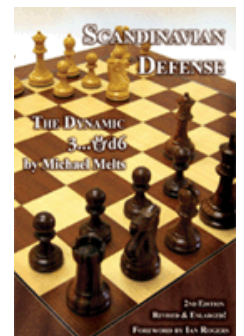
4...Bb4 5 Qd3 followed by an early 0-0-0 has been seen in several games. At the end of this article there is a game with 4...Bc5.

5 Bg5 d5?

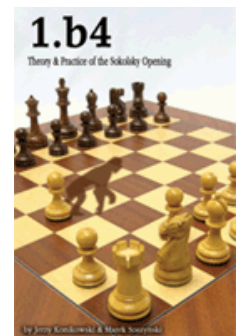
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*The Van Geet Opening*  
by Don Maddox



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by Michael Melts



*1.b4: Theory & Practice of the Sokolsky Opening*  
by Jerzy Konikowski & Marek Soszynski



This is typical of the overoptimistic reactions that can get Black into trouble early on in this opening. Instead 5...Bb4 6 Nxc6 bxc6 7 Qd4 Be7 8 e4 gives a sort of Scotch Game. After 8...0-0 9 Bd3 h6 10 Bf4 d5 11 0-0 dxe4, Black had neutralised the pressure and a draw soon resulted in Ekebjærg-Oim, 14th CC World Ch.

**6 e4 Be7 7 Bb5 Bd7 8 exd5 Nxd5 9 Nxd5 Bxg5 10 Qe2+ Ne7?**

This loses at once and the other self-pin by 10...Be7 is also very awkward after 11 0-0-0, so she should have played 10...Kf8, although the loss of castling rights means that Black automatically stands worse.

**11 Qe5 Bxb5 12 Nxc7+ Kf8 13 Nde6+ 1-0**

Dunst was by no means the originator of the opening, which was even known in the 19th century, but as yet no generally agreed name has settled on it. In the Netherlands it is sometimes called the Van Geet Opening after correspondence grandmaster Dick D. van Geet; in 1990 New In Chess published a booklet by him with that title. Here is one of Van Geet's more recent games with it.

*D.D. van Geet – P. Beuger, Haarlem open, The Netherlands 1992*

**1 Nc3 d5 2 e4**

Here, too, White has other choices, including 2 d4 (heading for a Veresov or Blackmar-Diemer Gambit), 2 Nf3 (perfectly available) or 2 f4!? as advocated in the strangely named book 1 Nc3 Sleipner-Eroffnung by Norwegian postal player Anker Aasum (published in German in 1988 by Manfred Maedler). Apparently Sleipner was the eight-legged horse of the Norse God Odin (Wotan in German) and of course a well-placed knight in chess can have eight possible moves.

With 2 e4, the move most usually played, we reach an important position that can also arise from the Scandinavian (Center-Counter) Opening after 1 e4 d5 2 Nc3!? Black can go for a Caro-Kann (2...c6), but remember that White does not have to play 3 d4. Similarly, a French Defence (2...e6) or kind of Alekhine's (2...Nf6) can arise, but the two main possibilities are the pawn advance and the capture on e4.

**2...d4**

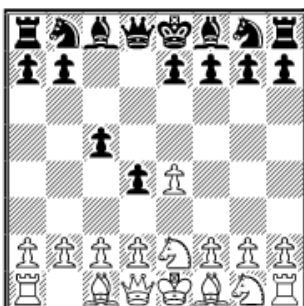
We'll look at 2...dxe4 later on.

**3 Nce2**

Van Geet once played 3 Nb1!? against Spassky (with an early draw) – a move approved by the late Max Euwe, who observed that the black d-pawn is worse off on d4 than d7. However, the principal idea that White has in this line is to provoke the d-pawn's advance, potentially creating weaknesses, transfer the knight to g3 and (if allowed) the king's bishop to c4 with strong attacking chances.

**3...c5**

**5 Bg5 d5?**



**4 Ng3 Nf6**

The game Dunst-Osher, New York 1956 went 4...g6 5 Bc4 Nc6 6 d3 Bg7 7 f4 Nf6 8 Nf3 a6 9 a4 Na5 10 Ba2 0-0 11 0-0 Nc6 with a position somewhat like a Grand Prix Attack in the Sicilian. Black defended badly

and lost in twenty-five moves.

**5 Bc4 e6 6 d3 Nc6 7 f4 a6 8 a4 h5 9 h3 h4 10 Nf1 Qc7 11 Bd2 b6 12 Qf3 Bb7 13 Qf2 Be7 14 Nf3 0-0-0**

Although Black has castled on the opposite wing, White's attack is very powerful.

**15 Ng5 Rdf8 16 Nxf7!**

The black king will be driven on to the dangerous h2-b8 diagonal.

**16...Rh5 17 Bxe6+ Kb8 18 f5 Bd6 19 Nxd6 Qxd6 20 Bf4 Ne5 21 g4!**

The point. Whether or not Black captures en passant, White gets the queen behind the bishop.

**21...Rhh8 22 Qh2 1-0**

The line with 2...d4 is so important that we shall look at another example, in which Black plays a more solid defence that is broken down in spectacular fashion.

*Harald Keilhack – Olaf Funke, corr 1996*

**1 Nc3 d5 2 e4 d4 3 Nce2 e5 4 Ng3 Be6!**

This formation, preventing Bc4, is the most logical follow-up to 2...d4.

**5 Nf3! f6?!**

Not 5...Nc6? 6 Bb5! – a motif that often occurs in this opening. Black can avoid the pin by 5...Nd7 6 c3 c5 7 Bb5 Bd6. Here Ekebjærg played 8 b4 against English GM Simon Webb in Correspondence World Championship XIV and ground him down to win in over seventy moves.

**6 c3!?**

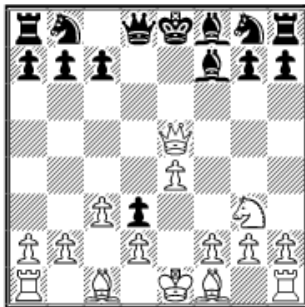
Ekebjærg played 6 Be2 here in two well-known games from the 1960s. I don't know if he would prefer some other move nowadays.

**6...d3**

I think 6...c5 7 Bb5+ Nd7 is the most solid plan, when a game Miehle-Assum went 8 Bxd7+?, giving light-squared bishop free rein. 8 Qe2 is an improvement.

**7 Nxe5!? fxe5 8 Qh5+ Bf7 9 Qxe5+**

**5 Bg5 d5?**



White will obtain three pawns for the piece and it is quite hard for Black to organise a defence. It reminds me of the Cochrane Attack against the Petroff Defence (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 d6 4 Nxf7 etc.) but here White has a third pawn.

The Keilhack game is analysed in detail in the German periodical Randspringer. The continuation was **9...Ne7 10 Qb5+ Nbc6 11 Qxd3 Ng6 12 Qxd8+ Rxd8 13 d4 Be7 14 Be2 0-0 15 0-0 Rfe8 16 f3! Bh4! 17 Nf5 Bf6 18 Be3 Nce7 19 Nxe7+ Rxe7 20 Rfd1 c6 21 Rd2 Red7 22 Bd1! b5 23 f4 c5 24 d5 c4?! 25 g3 a6 26 Bf3 b4 27 Bd4 bxc3 28 bxc3 Bxd4+ 29 Rxd4 Rc7 30 e5 Nf8 31 e6 Bxe6 32 dxe6 Nxe6 33 Bd5 Rxd5 34 Rxd5** and Black soon resigned.

If Black captures on e4 instead at move two, the character of the game is totally different. The position is very fluid with the emphasis on rapid development and therefore although this maybe one of Black's best lines, it does not suit everybody.

*Ove Ekebjærg – Luba Kristol, 14th CC World Ch Final 1994-97*

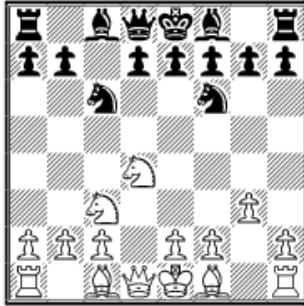
**1 Nc3 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 Nxe4 e5**



move that is only a precondition for development (e4).”

5 g3

5 Bg5 d5?



An important decision point for White. 5 Bg5 is often played here and tends to lead to Sicilian-like positions, whereas now we have a reversed English Opening.

5...e5 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Bg2 Be6 8 Bg5 a6 9 Na3 Be7 10 0-0 Qb6 11 Bxf6 gxf6 12 Nd5 Bxd5 13 Qxd5 Qxb2 14 Nc4 Qd4 15 Rab1 Qxd5 16 Bxd5

Black has the weaknesses of a Sveshnikov Sicilian without the counterplay, since White's king and e-pawn are secure and his bishop is very active.

16...Nd8 17 Bxb7 Ra7 18 Bd5 0-0 19 Rfd1 Ne6 20 Rb6 Rc8 21 c3 a5 22 Nxd6 Bxd6 23 Bxe6 fxe6 24 Rxd6 Rxc3 25 Rxe6 Ra3 26 Rb2 and White eventually won the rook ending.

Of course an article of this length can only scratch the surface of this fascinating opening. You can [download](#) a file of over 1,000 games with 1 Nc3 from the well-known Pittsburgh FTP chess archive and take it from there.

To conclude, the opening 1 Nc3 is not only for use in correspondence play. It has also long been a favourite of the FIDE international master from Sarajevo, Zvonko Mestrovic. I recently learned that he survived the civil war in Bosnia and now lives in Slovenia where he still plays 1 Nc3. Here is a game he won there.

*Mestrovic – Truta, Ljubljana Open 1994*

1 Nc3 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 Bc5 5 Be3 Nxd4

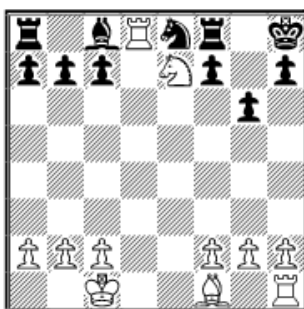
If Black thought that trading pieces would bring easy equality, he soon got a nasty shock.

6 Bxd4 Bxd4 7 Qxd4 Nf6 8 e4 d6 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 e5 Ne8 11 exd6 Qxd6 12 Qxd6 Nxd6 13 Nd5

Very embarrassing.

13...Ne8 14 Ne7+ Kh8 15 Rd8 g6

5 Bg5 d5?



The game is over really, but Black hopes that White will capture on c8 with his knight (creating a self-pin) or with the rook, and get his knight trapped. The next move is much better than either capture.

16 Be2! Bg4 17 Rxa8 Bxe2 18 Re1 Bb5 19 Rd1 Kg7 20 Rdd8 Kf6 21 Nd5+ Ke6 22 Rxa7 Bc6 23 c4 f6 24 Raa8 b5 25 Rxe8+ 1-0

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